



TAUBE
FOUNDATION
FOR JEWISH LIFE
AND CULTURE

SPECIAL REPORT

Jewish Heritage Initiative in Poland

A PEOPLEHOOD PROGRAM
OF THE TAUBE FOUNDATION FOR JEWISH LIFE & CULTURE

2011 YEAR IN REVIEW



How does one bring Judaism back to a community that had been denied so much and for so long? How does one encourage a new generation of young Polish Jews, intent on joining the job market in the European Union, to remain in their native country, develop cultural ties to their roots and religion, and take on the mantle of Jewish communal leadership?

In response to these questions, the Taube Foundation for Jewish Life & Culture created the Jewish Heritage Initiative in Poland (JHIP) to support the key cultural, educational and communal programs that are strategically addressing these issues and meeting the diverse and complex needs of re-emerging Jewish communities.

Founded in 2003, the JHIP nurtures the revival of Jewish life in Poland, furthers awareness of this resurgence among Jews and non-Jews, and fosters positive interest in Poland and Polish Jews among Jews worldwide.

With thanks to your ongoing involvement, the JHIP has become a major force in the revitalization of Jewish life in Poland, supporting more than 70 programs and five new educational initiatives in the arenas of scholarship, genealogy and publishing; community building; the arts; educational tourism; and heritage restoration.

This has been a banner year, with our newest initiatives – the Taube Jewish Heritage Tour Program and the Jewish Genealogy & Family Heritage Center – exceeding our target goals to ably serve Jewish youth and adults worldwide wishing to explore their Polish roots and celebrate the Jewish renewal in today’s democratic Poland. By linking living heritage to the Polish past, JHIP programs bring history forward for future generations in critical ways that inform identity and peoplehood. In so doing, the JHIP deepens the Jewish world’s understanding of peoplehood as viewed through the historical role of Polish Jews in the life and culture of Jewish people everywhere.



MESSAGE FROM THE Chairman and Executive Director



TAUBE FOUNDATION FOR JEWISH LIFE & CULTURE

Tad Taube
Chairman



Shana Penn
Executive Director

The Jewish Heritage Initiative in Poland (JHIP) has come a long way since its founding almost a decade ago. We need only look at the accomplishments of this past year to feel the pride and excitement that result from our commitment to nourishing Polish Jewish life, made possible by all of our valued supporters (see p. 19). The programs and events highlighted here fulfill our mission to broaden global understanding of Jewish peoplehood through the history, life and culture of Polish Jewry for the benefit of Jewish people everywhere.

Of special note, the Museum of the History of Polish Jews will open its doors to the world in April 2013 on the 70th anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. A beacon of Jewish awakening in the New Poland, the Museum's exhibition content and educational philosophy have already earned endorsements from Israel's Yad Vashem and other leading Jewish institutions. As the inaugural date nears, we will present you with opportunities for participation in the Museum's opening-year events.

The enormous success of the Jewish Culture Festival in Kraków is evidenced by a record-breaking 25,000 participants, of all ages and backgrounds, who reveled in eight days and nights of concerts, lectures, language workshops, dances, exhibits, and more. This remarkable fluorescence of Jewish culture speaks to the power of Jewish music and storytelling to bring people from around the world together in celebration of Jewish life.

For the JHIP there is much to celebrate. Our Taube grantees shine in the public spotlight, garnering national and international acclaim. Among these is Mary Skinner's award-winning film of Irena Sendler, a Righteous Among the Nations. Through one life, the many are illuminated. This inspirational lesson

is told no better than through the Taube Foundation's annual Irena Sendler Memorial Award, which we and US Ambassador Lee Feinstein bestowed last summer upon anti-Nazi partisan Magda Grodzka-Gużkowska in a heartfelt ceremony in Warsaw.

This award, together with our foundation's ongoing support of the Jewish Culture Festival, were commended by the President of Poland, Bronisław Komorowski. Moments such as these highlight the many ways that the Taube Foundation finds connection and ongoing dedication to revitalize Jewish life and culture through the aims and initiatives of the JHIP.

We continue our groundbreaking work with the Jewish Genealogy & Family Heritage Center, the Taube Jewish Heritage Tour Program, and the Taube Center for the Renewal of Jewish Life. The Genealogy Center is creating a user-friendly interactive website, enabling research and real-time Internet consultation. For those seeking to visit the sites of their family histories, the Taube Tour Program works closely with the Genealogy Center to craft tailor-made trips for individuals, families and groups.

Looking ahead, we can already see the possibilities for the next generation through JHIP support of the new Warsaw and Kraków JCCs, young adult groups such as ZOOM and Czulent, and JHIP-sponsored teen tours, student exchanges and field research stipends. As this report can attest, the reach and results of the JHIP continue to flourish, strengthening Poland's Jewish community and linking American Jews to their Ashkenazi heritage through scholarly and cultural exchange, traveling exhibits, scholarships and tours. Thank you for joining us in this remarkable journey.

21st
ANNUAL

Kraków Jewish Culture Festival

To speak of the 21st annual Jewish Culture Festival in Kraków, held June 24 through July 3, 2011, one must simply let the numbers speak for themselves: over 25,000 people attended 272 events during the ten days of the festival (including 24 concerts, 33 lectures, 70 workshops, 39 tours, to name a few). Performers, speakers, and instructors flocked to Kraków from the US, Israel, England, France, Ukraine, Canada, Spain, Mali, and of course, from within Poland.

“Words are inadequate to convey the joy and the lasting sense of connectedness that we both feel upon our return from the festival. Just being in that remarkable place, throbbing with change and with Jewish feeling, defying 20th-century history and writing a chapter for the future.”

—Howard and Judy Sacks

Leilah Broukhim, inspired by her Jewish and Persian roots and by her experience with the flamenco art form, created an acclaimed performance entitled “Dejando Huellas — Traces.”



The star-studded schedule of events included famous animator Arie Kaplan; the Israeli ambassador to Poland, Zvi Rav-Ner; New York Times bestselling author of “Born to Kvetch,” Michael Wex; Jewish cooking author Janna Gur; innovative graphic designer and typographer Oded Ezer; and musical performers Daniel Kahn & the Painted Bird, the Bester Quartet, Abraham Inc., Yemen Blues, Roger Davidson Ensemble, Tsuker-Zis, Di Naye Kapelye, Alfred Shreyer, Khaira Arby, and, from Madrid, flamenco dancer Leilah Broukhim.



Congratulations to the Taube Foundation's 2011 Irena Sendler Memorial Award Recipient: Magda Grodzka-Gużkowska

Poland's President Names Irena Sendler Award Ceremony Highlight of Festival

The 21st annual Jewish Culture Festival in Kraków was held under the honorary patronage of Polish President Bronisław Komorowski, who, in his preface to the Festival Program, extolled the Taube Foundation's presentation of the Irena Sendler Memorial Award: "I was particularly pleased to see that the Festival's program includes the showing of the film *Irena Sendler: In the Name of their Mothers*, and the ceremony for the Irena Sendler Memorial Award by the Taube Foundation for Jewish Life & Culture. My warmest congratulations go to those awarded. Let me note that memory of the Polish Righteous is and will continue to be an element shaping our shared historical memory."

Congratulations to the 2011 recipient of the Irena Sendler Memorial Award, Magdalena Grodzka-Gużkowska. Born Magda Rusinek on January 7, 1925, Magda was 15 years old when she joined the anti-Nazi Polish Underground. In 1943, working secretly with a network of other brave resistance fighters led by Irena Sendler, she began assisting with the rescue of Jewish children. Magda helped smuggle children out of the Ghetto, cared for them and escorted them to places of refuge with Polish families or in convents. Before bringing the children to their hiding places, she taught them Christian customs in an effort to disguise their Jewish identity. She says of her heroic acts, "When during the war, as a young girl, I saved Jews, I simply saved people, the way I could and as many as I could. This is the way my family, my school and the Home Army brought me up... I know that life is worth living if you help at least one family, one child. I have had that joy, that luck."

"By helping Jews condemned to death you gave powerful testimony to the fact that even in the cruelest time, marked by the shadow of the Holocaust, man is capable of heroic acts, full of brotherly love and generosity."

— President Bronisław Komorowski

The award was presented in person to Magda on June 28, 2011, at the Nożyk Synagogue in Warsaw, by Shana Penn, Executive Director of the Taube Foundation, and Rabbi Michael Schudrich, Chief Rabbi of Poland. In announcing the award, Tad Taube, Chairman of the Taube Foundation, said, "Magda exemplifies all that this award was meant to honor. Her selfless bravery as she worked alongside Irena Sendler enabled thousands of Jewish children to survive. Who can count the descendants directly attributable to her heroism?"

Poland's President Bronisław Komorowski thanked her for her service in a letter read at the ceremony by a presidential representative: "By helping Jews condemned to death you gave powerful testimony to the fact that even in the cruelest time, marked by the shadow of the Holocaust, man is capable of heroic acts, full of brotherly love and generosity. This is a magnificent example of the readiness to serve one's fellow men, those

“When during the war, as a young girl, I saved Jews, I simply saved people, the way I could and as many as I could. This is the way my family, my school and the Home Army brought me up. . . I know that life is worth living if you help at least one family, one child. I have had that joy, that luck.”

— Magda Grodzka-Gużkowska

who are weaker and in need, even at the risk of one’s own life. Poland may be proud of having such citizens.”

Participating in award ceremony, US Ambassador to Poland Lee Feinstein spoke, “Pani Magda’s selfless bravery reflects humanity at its best. It also shows the reality of Poland today – a democratic society built on the foundations of mutual respect and tolerance. Pani Magda, we thank you for your compassion, your heroism, and your humanity. You inspire us.” The ceremony was attended by over 100 people, all of whom left moved by Magda’s inspirational heroism.

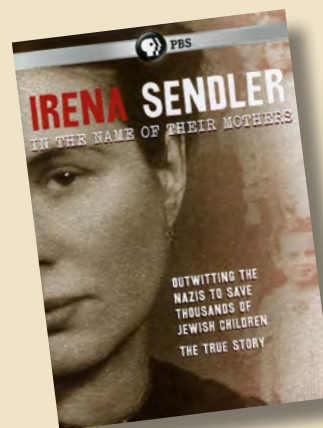
During the war, Pani Magda also served in the counter-intelligence unit of the Home Army. After the war, she lived in Canada. She invented her own method of treating autistic children, and after her return to Poland in the 1970s, she pioneered this work at the prestigious Institute of Psychiatry and Neurology, although she holds no college degree. In the ’90s she helped organize the first Polish convoys to reach besieged Sarajevo during the Bosnian war.

Magda discovered late in life that she is actually Jewish. This newfound identity held up Yad Vashem from recognizing her as Righteous Among the Nations. But thanks to Rabbi Schudrich and renowned journalist Konstanty Gebert, who sent affidavits to Yad Vashem certifying that Magda did not know she was Jewish during WWII, she is the first (and, to the best of our knowledge, only) Jew to be recognized by Yad Vashem. Today, Magda has close ties with the Warsaw Jewish Community and has pledged to leave her home and property to the Jewish community after her death.



Magdalena Grodzka-Gużkowska receives the Taube Foundation's Irena Sendler Award. (left to right, Magdalena Matuszewska, Ambassador Feinstein, Magdalena Grodzka-Gużkowska, Shana Penn, Konstanty Gebert, Helise Lieberman).

***Irena Sendler: In the Name of Their Mothers* Premiers on PBS**



Taube grantee and seasoned San Francisco filmmaker Mary Skinner has produced a widely acclaimed documentary, *Irena Sendler: In the Name of their Mothers*, recounting the heroic acts of Irena Sendler, who organized the rescue from the Warsaw Ghetto of 2,500 Jewish children. The documentary was broadcast on National PBS on Holocaust Remembrance Day, after its debut at the Museum of the History of Polish Jews in Warsaw. It reached 3.2 million households and was shown 790 times from May 1-June 1, 2011, and is now available on DVD through pbs.org. It won “Best Feature Documentary” at the UK Jewish Film Festival 2010, was an official selection at Cinequest 2011, San Jose, CA; Athens International Film Festival 2011; and the Staten Island Film Festival 2011, and has won the 2012 Gracie Award for Outstanding Documentary. The film has had screenings in the US, Canada, Mexico, the UK, and Poland, where it was a featured film at the Kraków Jewish Culture Festival.

Building Construction Nears Completion; Installation of Core Exhibition Begins

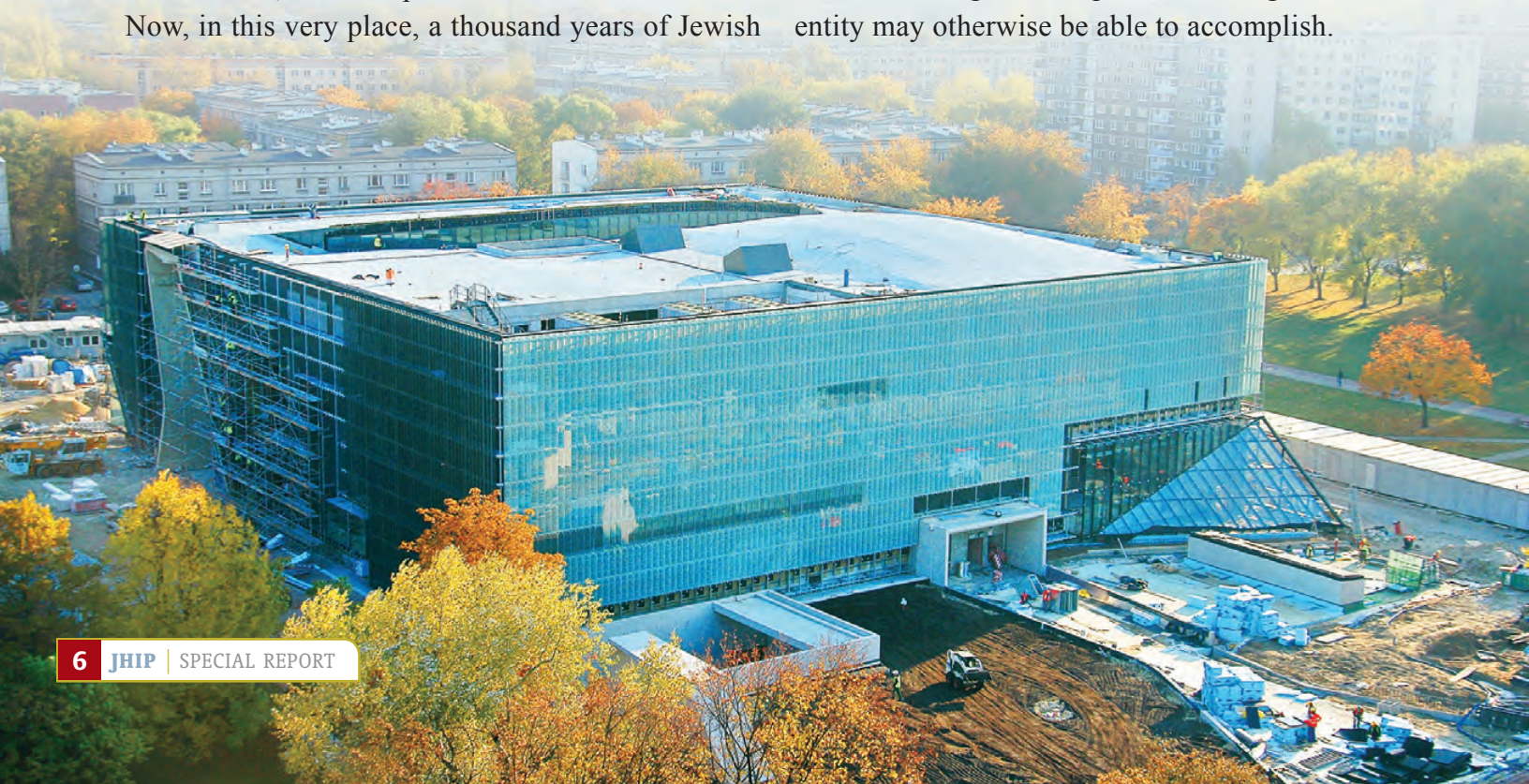
The Museum of the History of Polish Jews, rising up on the historic site of the Warsaw Ghetto, is well on its way to completion. Designed by the Finnish architectural firm Rainer Mahlamäki and Ilmari Lahdelma, the Museum is scheduled to open on the 70th anniversary of the Ghetto Uprising, April 19, 2013. Now, finally, the legacy of East European Jewry will be able to be explored in the very place where this history unfolded.

The unique copper-and-glass façade of the finished structure will create a dynamic interplay between light and form, captivating visitors with its dramatic backlit views. The glass panels are being embellished with a special screen print pattern of elegant letters taken from Latin and Hebrew alphabets. Together, the letters signify the word “Polin” (פּוֹלִין) — the Hebrew word for Poland — interpreted as “Po-lin”: po (“here”) lin (“[you should] dwell”). In the dramatic reach of the building’s exterior, the medium is the message. The message of “Polin,” reported to have come to Poland’s first Jewish settlers from a divine voice, was interpreted as “a haven for Jews.” Now, in this very place, a thousand years of Jewish

history will shine in the light of the building’s façade. As they enter the Museum grounds, viewers will see the symbols of a thriving and creative culture reflected in the letters and relayed through their material design: the fragility of glass, the sturdiness of copper, and the illumination of light shed on the past and in celebration of an active Polish Jewish cultural center.

This stunning, state-of-the-art Jewish museum will be on a par with the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum and Israel’s Yad Vashem. The key difference is that the Museum of the History of Polish Jews will extend the historical narrative beyond the Holocaust to encompass an epic Jewish history that even today profoundly shapes contemporary Israeli and American Jewish life.

Tad Taube, a Distinguished Benefactor of the Museum, has enlisted the principle of collaborative funding to help support the Museum, recognizing that bringing donors together to pool their resources can achieve much greater impact than a single charitable entity may otherwise be able to accomplish.



HANDS ON HISTORY: The Wooden Synagogue Project

The centerpiece of the Museum of the History of Polish Jews' Core Exhibition is a reconstruction close to scale of the 17th century wooden Gwoździec Synagogue destroyed in World War I. It is being built by an international group of architectural preservationists, master timber framers, art students, and other volunteers. Under the tutelage of the Handhouse Studio and Timber Framers Guild, the dedicated volunteers first gathered this past summer in Sanok in southern Poland to build the replica of the roof and inner cupola of the Gwoździec Synagogue by hand, using only the tools and techniques of the period. The act of building itself offers unparalleled historical authenticity and deep cultural significance to the re-creation, and makes it the perfect centerpiece for the Museum's Core Exhibition.

Once the roof was raised in Sanok, the team moved on to Rzeszów, Kraków, and Wrocław, where they hand-painted three of the eight ceiling panels. The workshop in Wrocław took place in the restored White Stork Synagogue, in cooperation with the Jewish Community of Wrocław. The last five painting workshops will take place in synagogues in different cities in Poland during the summer of 2012. The local population is always invited to presentations of the project during the workshops.



Part of the hand-painted ceiling of the wooden synagogue project.

When completed, the synagogue exhibit will serve not only as a monument to the preservation of Jewish cultural history but as a symbol of the celebration of its continuation.

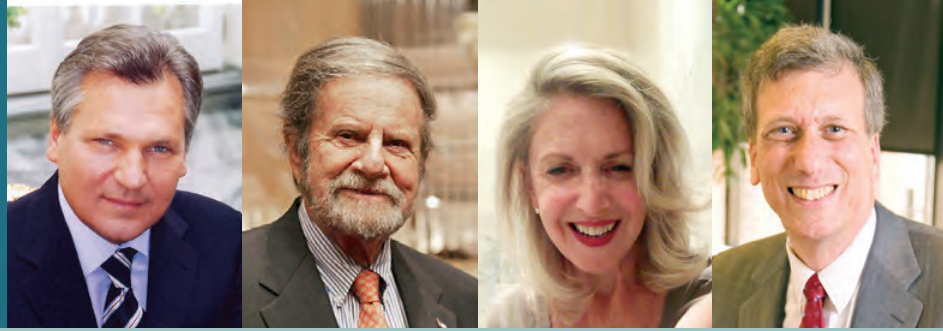
Once all of the synagogue components are complete, they will be disassembled and shipped to Warsaw, where they will be installed in the Museum. Lead funding for this project was provided by Irene Pletka, Founder and Chairman of the Kronhill Pletka Foundation and a member of the Museum's Distinguished Benefactors' Circle.

This project and the Museum have received excellent coverage in the *New York Times*, the *Forward*, the *Jerusalem Post*, and *Tablet*, among other media. The Core Exhibition has received endorsements from Yad Vashem, the US Holocaust Memorial Museum, and many other scholars worldwide.



Distinguished Benefactor
Irene Pletka in Sanok,
Poland, with a model
of the synagogue.

Milken Global Conference



Left to right: Aleksander Kwasniewski, Tad Taube, Irene Pletka, Arnold Eisen.

Hosts Forum on the Museum of the History of Polish Jews

“While there are many sites of Jewish cultural renaissance in the world, having a Polish site of Jewish renaissance, linked with the Polish democratic renaissance, is a unique opportunity for Jews. . . . It’s a good thing for Poland, it’s a very good thing for the Jewish people and for Judaism as well.”

— Dr. Arnold Eisen
Chancellor, Jewish Theological Seminary

On May 3, 2011, the Milken Institute Global Conference featured a private roundtable entitled “The Culture and Economy of the New Poland,” during which all the distinguished panelists remarked upon the importance of the Museum of the History of Polish Jews to Poland and the global community.

The keynote speaker was the Honorable Aleksander Kwaśniewski, president of Poland from 1995 to 2005. Joining President Kwaśniewski in making presentations at the conference were the Honorable Tad Taube, Chairman of Taube Philanthropies, President of the Koret Foundation, and Honorary Consul for the Republic of Poland in the San Francisco Bay Area; Irene Pletka, a Distinguished Benefactor of the Museum and Founding Chairman of the Kronhill Pletka Foundation; and Dr. Arnold Eisen, Chancellor of the Jewish Theological Seminary and a Taube Foundation Board Member. Panelists discussed the Museum’s importance to Poland’s cultural history and to the flourishing of Jewish heritage today.

As President Kwaśniewski so eloquently stated, “Poland needs international centers like the Museum, because we need places that will illuminate our deep roots, our common history, mutual respect and shared moral values.”



Helping individuals and their families piece together the puzzle of their Jewish identities and heritage



Interactive Website Project of the Jewish Genealogy & Family Heritage Center

The Koret Foundation of San Francisco and Irene Pletka, Founding Chairman of the Kronhill Pletka Foundation, have each awarded \$25,000 start-up grants toward the creation and launch of an interactive website to increase accessibility to the world's most extensive collection of historical archives of the Jewish people in Eastern Europe. The archives are housed at the Emanuel Ringelblum Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw, which also is home to the Jewish Genealogy & Family Heritage Center. The Center's website will not only provide guided research and information to clients worldwide in direct, real-time consultations, but will also gather family information, photos and documentation.

year. We greatly value the Kronhill Pletka Foundation's and the Koret Foundation's financial support, but just as important to us are the moral support that these grants imply.



“The website will make it possible for researchers worldwide to access the resources of the Jewish Historical Institute, to communicate with our staff, and to share their own materials with the Institute, making more information available to future researchers. The site will also share inspirational tales of successful searches, research breakthroughs and long-awaited reunions, as well as informational sidebars on pertinent themes.”



Shana Penn, Taube Foundation Executive Director, and Yale Reisner, Genealogy Center Director, speaking with a 101-year-old man in the village of Porozovo, Belarus, on a family roots journey, July 2011.

Irene Pletka recently had the opportunity to visit the Genealogy Center in Warsaw. Reisner reports: “Irene's visits to our Center were both charming and exciting. We found some important family documents for her in our own archives and in others: we even found some living cousins! We had fascinating conversations with her and learned a great deal about her dramatic family history. Irene was kind enough to share with us, with the Institute and, thereby, with researchers to come her wonderful collection of photos and papers that bring to life some crucial junctures in Jewish history as viewed through the lens of her highly educated and socially active family.”

Director of the Jewish Genealogy & Family Heritage Center Yale Reisner extends his thanks both to the Koret Foundation and to the Kronhill Pletka Foundation for “these most generous grants that will make it possible for us to design and launch our Center's interactive website in the coming

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Participate in Today's Jewish Revival
Explore...Engage...Renew...Bear Witness...

Taube Jewish Heritage Tours: Experience the New Poland

“Pure ‘Freilach!’ That’s the best way to sum up our trip to Poland.” The Yiddish word for joy is not exactly one you’d expect to hear when describing Jewish travel to Poland — a country most people associate with the Holocaust. But Howard and Judy Sacks’ memory of their trip during the Kraków Jewish Culture Festival is testament to the fact that there is something new and very different going on in Poland.

The couple is part of a new breed of travelers flocking to Poland to explore firsthand the remarkable resurgence of Jewish life and culture there. Their travel needs are aptly served by Taube Jewish Heritage Tours, a program of the Warsaw-based Taube Center for the Renewal of Jewish Life in Poland. Under the direction of educator Helise Lieberman, Taube Tours offers a series of customized tours enabling visitors to discover Poland’s past and present on terms most meaningful to them.

Growing interest in touring modern Poland is clearly part of a larger trend. Poland has emerged as Europe’s

newest popular destination, with a quarter of a million Americans visiting each year and the *Los Angeles Times* ranking Warsaw as number three on a list of 29 destinations to visit. But there is something more going on here too, something distinctly Jewish.

With Taube Jewish Heritage Tours, visitors can explore their past, engage in today’s Jewish revival, renew their Jewish identity, bear witness to the Holocaust, dialogue with Poland’s leaders, meet their Jewish contemporaries, experience history in the making and help rebuild Jewish life. Options range from all-inclusive 8- to 14-day heritage tours to short specialty tours that supplement other travel plans. Taube Tours also provides publications and other informational resources on historical and contemporary Jewish themes.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:

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Shalhevet Teen Group Visits Poland and Israel

The Bureau of Jewish Education's Shalhevet – meaning “flame” in Hebrew — is unique among educational teen travel programs to Poland and Israel. It is built around a comprehensive educational curriculum that fully engages the participants prior to the trip and includes extensive follow-up. The five-month program includes an in-depth study of Eastern European Jewish history, the Holocaust, and the founding of the State of Israel. A major focus of is experiential: participants explore the revitalization of Polish Jewish life and discover Israel through a variety of activities.

“My favorite part of the trip was visiting Kraków. I was able to see a different side of Poland and focus on things that give more hope, like the JCC, and it was also really interesting to talk to the Jewish teens and learn more about their reality.”

Underlying the program is a focus on the interconnectedness of the worldwide Jewish community and the importance of the Jewish values that help young people become responsible citizens of the world.

During the two-week tour to Poland and Israel, Shalhevet's curriculum is brought to life as the teens engage with their Polish and Israeli peers. In addition to providing funding support, the Taube Foundation partners with BJE to provide curricular resources about Polish Jewish life and educational activities during their study tour.



Osher Marin JCC Group Tours Poland with Taube Jewish Heritage Tours



The Osher Marin Jewish Community Center toured Poland with the Taube Foundation's tourism program. The group, from the California North Bay, spent seven days exploring the revival of Jewish life and culture in Warsaw and Kraków, meeting with key figures such as the Chief Rabbi of Poland, Rabbi Michael Schudrich; US Ambassador Lee Feinstein; US Consul General to Poland Allen Greenberg; and the director of the JCC Kraków, Jonathan Ornstein.

“It was profound and moving to experience the present flourishing of interest in Jewish culture in Poland. The people we met through the Taube Foundation and the events at the Jewish Culture Festival were all fantastic!”

— Susan and Joe Berland

The group was excited to experience the 21st Annual Jewish Culture Festival in Kraków, and to attend a standing-room-only Shabbat dinner organized by the Kraków JCC. Joanne and Fred Greene were both delighted and inspired: “Speaking with young Poles newly discovering their Jewish roots was an indescribable thrill. In Kraków, Jewish culture is hip.”



NCSJ Student Leadership Program Visits Moscow and Warsaw

In March of 2011, NCSJ, an advocate for Jewish communities in the successor states of the former Soviet Union, in collaboration with the Stanford University and Moscow Hillels, led a group of young adults on an 8-day seminar in both Moscow and Warsaw. The Jewish peers explored the similarities and differences in processes of democracy building and its impact on Jewish identity and Jewish life in those communities.

The students expressed amazement at the transformation of their perceptions of Jewish life in Poland. Jacob Portes from Stanford University Hillel observed:

“In Jewish day school and at home, I was never taught to think of Poland as more than a cemetery for millions of Jews. To see a functioning, modern European society was a nice shock to the system, and I left optimistic about Poland. It was especially nice to spend time with people from the Jewish community, and to really feel their energy and optimism.”

Yael Wulfovich from Stanford University Hillel said, “I went to Poland exactly one year ago on the March of the Living and I hated it. I thought it was grey, a land of ashes. This trip completely changed my perspective. I learned that even after the Holocaust, life remains, and a Jewish community is slowly but surely blooming.”

Experiencing the rebirth of Jewish life in Poland with their Jewish peers was a meaningful and unforgettable experience for the participants. The trip truly accomplished NCSJ’s goal of fostering a future generation of international Jewish leaders.

Taube Foundation Releases Two New Publications and Prepares a Tourism Study Guide



The Taube Foundation for Jewish Life & Culture, in cooperation with the Taube Center for the Renewal of Jewish Life in Poland and the Honorary Consul for the Republic of Poland in the San Francisco Bay Area, has released two new publications. “1,000 Years of Jewish Life in Poland: A Timeline” is an entirely updated version of our previously celebrated timeline, now including historical and contemporary photos and illustrations to help bring to life the rich tapestry of Jewish life in Poland for over a millennium. Concurrently, we have released “Deep Roots, New Branches: Personal Essays on the Rebirth of Jewish Life in Poland Since 1989.” This collection of first-person accounts by those who lived through and continue to witness Poland’s remarkable renaissance represents a one-of-a-kind testimonial to the dramatic changes in Poland over the last 22 years.

In order to facilitate and grow our cultural tourism program, we are preparing a Study Guide to Warsaw and Krakow, which will present a powerful narrative of Polish Jewish heritage and will help visitors answer vital questions, such as: Who are we, and where do we come from? Why is Jewish renewal in Poland a cause for hope and celebration? How can we reconnect global Jewry to our Ashkenazi birthright in meaningful ways?

JCC Kraków:

Growing Membership and International Recognition

Over the past year, the Kraków Jewish Community Center has seen a steady but remarkable increase in the numbers coming through its doors, reports Jonathan Ornstein, Director. Key to this success has been the variety of courses and activities on offer as well as their effective promotion. The Center has achieved this by providing a pluralistic center for all of Kraków's Jews, whether they are Jewish by Orthodox tradition, the Israeli Law of Return, or self-definition.

The regular Shabbat dinner and holiday celebrations in the Center provide an easy entry point for all participants. In particular, the weekly Shabbat dinners, with an average of 70 people attending, are a focal point: for most people in Kraków, it is the only Shabbat dinner they experience. The Center's children's program has grown tremendously over the past year. The JCC also recently opened a Wellness Center for its members with the support of the Taube and Koret Foundations.



Helise Lieberman, left of center, Director of the Taube Center for the Renewal of Jewish Life in Poland, greets friends at a JCC dinner.

Though mainly attended by members of the local Jewish population, the JCC warmly welcomes visitors passing through. Many of these visitors are on their way to or from Auschwitz and are amazed find to a living, growing community in a town so close to the most infamous of the Nazi death camps.

The European Association of Jewish Community Centers (EAJCC) honored the Kraków JCC as its JCC of the Month for February 2011, having selected it from 50 contenders all over Europe. In choosing the Kraków JCC, the EAJCC particularly noted the phenomenon of young people discovering their Jewish roots and getting involved in Jewish life, and the JCC's active role in promoting Jewish life in a place that is so often associated in the public mind with Jewish death and suffering.

TO CONTACT THE KRAKÓW JCC:
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New JCC Opens in Warsaw

In Warsaw, on Sukkot, a new JCC opened, which will serve as a focal point for gathering the diverse community of the Jews of Warsaw, Poland's capital and largest city. It will provide cultural and educational activities for all ages. Thus far, the JCC Warsaw has organized Sukkot, a pluralistic event focused on families with young children, with over 100 participants. In the near future, the JCC plans to bring Limmud to the daily calendar of Jewish Warsaw, featuring public forums in contemporary Jewish arts and literature. Weekly Shabbat programs will bring together young families for educational and community building activities. In addition, there will be Hanukkah celebrations and other holiday activities and a museum program for young adults, including workshops with artists and other



Rabbi Daniel Simons (left) and Rabbi Tyson Herberger at a Sukkot celebration hosted by the Warsaw JCC.

famous local experts who will lead young people in explorations of significant figures in Jewish cultural and scientific history.

Matsiyahu Receives Koret Taube Jewish Peoplehood Award

Matsiyahu, the legendary reggae musician, fuses religious observance and Judaism's *hazzan* style of prayer with a contemporary mix of rap, beat-box and hip-hop. On June 19, 2011, the Taube and Koret Foundations presented him with the Inaugural Jewish Peoplehood Award during a standing-room-only performance in the Nożyk Synagogue, Warsaw's only synagogue to survive Nazi occupation. Matsiyahu's music is fostering pride in Jewish identity and heritage for new generations, making a uniquely Jewish contribution to global culture.

Matsiyahu also gave a concert in Oświęcim, where thousands of fans filled a stadium located not far from Auschwitz-Birkenau, the former Nazi death camps. Against the backdrop of unfathomable loss,



the concert celebrated the surprising revival and strength of Poland's Jewish life and culture.

Matsiyahu says of his performances in Poland, "There were a lot of survivors there, it was very intense, emotionally for me...I was surprised to realize that Polish people know my music." Such transformative experiences reaffirming Jewish life are what make Matsiyahu's music and message worthy of the Koret Taube Jewish Peoplehood Award.

Galicia Jewish Museum Receives Accolades as a Top Cultural Institution in Kraków



The Galicia Jewish Museum received top billing in the list of Best Cultural Institutions in Kraków in 2010. The award comes from the popular English-language Internet portal Cracow-Life. Since 2006, the Best Places list has honored organizations and institutions that present Kraków's history and culture in an attractive and interesting way while providing top-notch services and high standards of excellence. The Galicia Jewish Museum had over 20,000 visitors from around the world in 2010. Their featured exhibit, "Traces of Memory," comprised of the work of photojournalist Chris Schwarz z"l with captions by Professor Jonathan Webber, will be on tour in the US in 2012.



ZOOM Expands under New Leadership, Former Leaders Are Now Featured Filmmakers



Anna Bakula, new President of ZOOM (Polish Jewish Student and Youth Association), has been nominated to the European Union of Jewish Students (EUJS) and elected its Vice President. Congratulations, Anna! A delegation from the EUJS will join ZOOM in Kraków for their pre-Limmud seminar. ZOOM is also proud to report that they have new offices and are expanding their membership throughout Poland.

Past President of ZOOM Jan Śpiewak and member Ivo Krankowski have received praise for their documentary film, "8 Stories That Haven't Changed the World," documenting the childhood memories of eight Polish Jews born before World War II. "8 Stories" was featured in the Jewish Film Festival in New York in January 2011, receiving positive reviews in media such as the *Forward*, which wrote of the film: "Hopefully this film will find its way to schools, synagogues and Jewish centers everywhere. It is an uplifting postscript to the Holocaust. Though, as its title proclaims, this little film may not change the world, it will impact on everyone who sees it." "8 Stories" has been screened in US venues, including the Polish Film Festival in Los Angeles in October 2011.



Anna Bakula,
President of ZOOM.



Honorary Consul Tad Taube Kicks off Poland 500 Innovators Program

Tad Taube, Honorary Consul for the Republic of Poland in the San Francisco Bay Area and Chairman of the Taube Foundation for Jewish Life & Culture, was honored to give the opening address at the inaugural “Poland 500 Innovators Program” at Stanford University on October 16. The first group of 50 participants from Poland came to Stanford in the spirit of intellectual rigor, entrepreneurship, and cross-cultural collaboration to meet with researchers and academics in the science and engineering industries from Stanford and the surrounding Silicon Valley. As Honorary Consul Taube noted in his opening speech, it is time for Poland to step up and attain a higher level of innovation that is comparable with its exceptionally

strong economy, stable democracy, and leadership role in the European Union. The Polish Government has recognized this need, and seeks to increase innovation through such programs as the “Poland 500.” This program will foster connections between the US and Poland’s most respected scientists and researchers, and allow for collaborations that will take Poland’s innovations to the next level. By the end of 2015, approximately 500 scientists, academic-research workers or innovators will have traveled to the US to participate in these internships and trainings. Consul Taube hopes to see generations of collaborations initiated by this program.

Tad Taube, front row, fourth from left, with the Stanford group of Polish Innovators.



San Francisco-Kraków Sister Cities Association Honors Lech Wałęsa at the Independent Institute



Honorary Consuls Tad Taube and Christopher Kerosky represented the San Francisco-Kraków Sister Cities Association at the Independent Institute's 25th Anniversary Gala for Liberty on November 15, honoring Lech Wałęsa, former President of Poland and 1983 recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize. Because of health considerations, President Wałęsa was not able to attend the event but gave an exclusive interview via video conferencing.

The Independent Institute recognizes exceptional contributions to humanity in advancing the ideas and ideals of individual liberty, entrepreneurship, personal responsibility, civic virtue, and the rule of law.

Honorary Consul Taube arranged to send a gift to President Wałęsa: a crystal sculpture of the San Francisco Skyline and Golden Gate Bridge, in honor of Mr. Wałęsa's support of the alliance between the two cities. The gift was presented to President Wałęsa in Warsaw by Shana Penn, Executive Director of the Taube Foundation and a Board Member of the Sister Cities Association.



Hon. Consul Tad Taube, right, accepting the Independent Institute award from CEO David Theroux on behalf of Lech Wałęsa.



President Lech Wałęsa receiving a crystal sculpture of the San Francisco skyline from Shana Penn, Executive Director of the Taube Foundation for Jewish Life & Culture.

President of the Polish National Bank, Marek Belka, Is Welcomed to the Bay Area

Marek Belka, former Polish Prime Minister and current President of the Polish National Bank, visited the Bay Area in August 2011. Consul Taube hosted a luncheon and presentation for economic experts at Stanford's Hoover Institution. Professor Belka also made presentations at the UC Berkeley Haas School of Business and at a private reception in the home of San Francisco-Kraków Sister City Association member Caroline Krawiec Brownstone. In each venue, Belka spoke about the role of the Euro zone and Poland's role in the European economy. At the Sister Cities event, participants felt that Belka's remarks reinforced the founding principle of the Sister Cities partnership: to foster dialogue between the two culturally and economically vibrant metropolises.



Chief Rabbi of Poland Welcomed to Bay Area

Rabbi Michael Schudrich, Chief Rabbi of Poland, visited the San Francisco Bay Area November 28-30, a guest of the Taube Foundation for Jewish Life & Culture and the Graduate Theological Union.



At the Palace Hotel, San Francisco, left to right: Tad Taube, Rabbi Michael Schudrich, Shana Penn.

The Rabbi was honored at a special reception at the Palace Hotel in San Francisco, co-sponsored by the Koret Foundation and attended by prominent Jewish community leaders. Tad Taube introduced the Rabbi as “the person who essentially has made our work in Poland possible.” (Listen to the Rabbi’s remarks at www.marinjcc.org.)

The following evening, Rabbi Schudrich spoke at a conference entitled “Formations of Orthodoxy” at the Center for Jewish Studies at the Graduate Theological Union. In conversation with Shana Penn, Executive Director of the Taube Foundation, Rabbi Schudrich explored the conference topic as it pertains to the revival of Jewish life and culture in Poland.

Publications and Exhibit at the Emanuel Ringelblum Jewish Historical Institute



From the exhibition, a sixteenth-century treasure: Moses Maimonides, *Mishne Torah*. Venice: Marco Antonio Giustiniani, 1550, with the original rabbinic censorship.

The Emanuel Ringelblum Jewish Historical Institute, the world’s largest repository of Polish Jewish archival, bibliographic and other materials, announced two recent scholarly publications from the archives of the Warsaw Ghetto: one on the life and art of Gela Seksztajn; one on everyday life in the Warsaw Ghetto. Work has begun on the next volume: ghettos in other occupied territories.

The Institute opened an exhibit displaying its collection of Hebrew and Yiddish books printed in the 16th-18th centuries. The exhibition catalogue is available in English and Polish. www.jewishinstitute.org.pl

US Dept. of State Provides Holocaust Education Grant to CENTROPA

The Department of State’s Office of International Religious Freedom awarded a \$200,000 grant to CENTROPA (Central Europe Center for Research and Documentation) to implement innovative Holocaust education programs in Hungary, Lithuania and Poland. CENTROPA, based in Vienna, teaches students in Central Europe about their country’s Jewish history, thereby increasing their tolerance for other ethnic and minority groups. Using web-based personal stories, traveling exhibitions, and teacher seminars, CENTROPA prepares educators to engage students with 20th century Jewish history and the Holocaust. CENTROPA currently uses this program in Germany, Israel, the Czech Republic, and the U.S. CENTROPA’s touring Taube-funded exhibit “Jewish Witness to a Polish Century” also continues to receive critical acclaim.



At a CENTROPA teacher seminar, educators share best practices in Holocaust education.

FODZ Completes Restoration of Zamość Synagogue along Chassidic Route



The Zamość Synagogue before (left) and after renovation.

The Renaissance synagogue in the Old Town of Zamość is one of the most spectacular monuments of Jewish heritage in Poland. Following the outbreak of World War II, the interior of the synagogue was looted and devastated by the Nazis. In 1941, the Germans converted the interior of the synagogue into a stable, and then a carpenters' workshop. The Foundation for the Preservation of Jewish Heritage (FODZ) has been the owner of the building since 2005. In 2008, the project, "Revitalization of the Renaissance synagogue in Zamość for the needs of the Chassidic Route and the local community" received funding, and from 2009-10 FODZ carried out construction and conservation works on the site, restoring the building to its original appearance and securing it for centuries to come. In 2011, the Synagogue Center, created to serve the needs of Jewish visitors to Zamość as well as those of its inhabitants, was opened within the renovated building.

The synagogue currently houses the Chassidic Route tourist and cultural information center as well as the Multimedia Museum of the History of the Jews of Zamość and the Surrounding Area, where visitors can learn about the history of the Jewish community that, over several centuries, took part in shaping the region's intellectual, religious and cultural identity. The Chassidic Route is an invaluable tourist route that follows traces of Jewish communities through southeastern Poland, and the Zamość Synagogue now serves as its epicenter.

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